

Mayor's Column for the September 25, 2013 edition of the Evansville Review

Behind the Scenes in Evansville

September is an extremely busy month for our city government and many local organizations. Much of the work and effort undertaken is not particularly evident to citizens, but has very significant impacts on our community. This column describes only a portion of the Evansville activity.

Mark Sendelbach, Jim Brooks, Nicole Sidoff, and I attended the annual meeting of WPPI Energy in Middleton on September 12. Presentations were heavily focused on the future evolution of the electric utility industry. My next column will elaborate on information and ideas that were shared at the conference. Transformational change in the industry is on the horizon.

This morning (September 25) the Evansville Women Entrepreneurs are holding their monthly meeting. Assistant Library Director Laura Damon-Moore is speaking about using social media in their businesses, as well as obtaining assistance in becoming proficient in social media use. There is exploration of partnering with the Evansville Community School District and having media-savvy student mentors for businesses. The energy and enthusiasm of this group is remarkable. Evansville is already benefitting from their efforts.

Tonight the Evansville School Board will hold its annual meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Media Room. The School District is an important asset in our community and the 2014 tax levy will be adopted at this meeting. Citizen committees are in the midst of holding several meetings to explore future needs for maintaining and enhancing a thriving, top notch district.

The Evansville Common Council and Department Heads will hold two lengthy meetings this week. On Thursday evening, September 26, at 5:45 p.m. at City Hall, the annual special Common Council meeting for budget presentations will be held. 2014 proposed departmental budgets will be explained. This Saturday (September 28), a Committee of the Whole meeting is scheduled, with a future-oriented focus. It will be held at Creekside Place, beginning at 8:00 a.m. Preliminary planning for the required ten year update to the award-winning Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan will be undertaken. We will also initiate conversation about the future trends and evolution of city services. This week the city received the final audit report for 2012. The city general fund balance increased, i.e. we ended the year in the black. The concerted efforts of your city government have resulted in fund balance increases every year since at least 2005.

I serve on the Wisconsin League of Municipalities Advisory Committee on Legislation. We are meeting in Madison this Friday to discuss current state issues and pending legislation. This meeting is timed to prepare for fall legislative sessions. The League is very concerned about the recent loss of local control in municipal decision-making. A couple of issues on Friday's agenda are proposed legislation on possession of dangerous

wild animals and a bill changing laws governing absentee voting at residential care facilities.

The third annual Lean Government Conference will be held in Madison on October 2. The Conference is sponsored by the Wisconsin Center for Performance Excellence. I attended the first two conferences and am registered for the upcoming session. Lean is a way of working that focuses on reducing waste of time and material while providing the same or better customer (citizen) value. The goal is improving efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace. The emphasis is on continual improvement and a drive for excellence that becomes ingrained into the organization. Evansville has begun to incorporate lean thinking in operations. Examples are altering the snow plow equipment to reduce the number of passes to clean the street, consolidating the duplicative accounting systems for city recordkeeping into one integrated system, and realigning departments at City Hall to streamline operations. The Common Council has committed to top notch service and drive for excellence. Citizens can expect to benefit from additional lean initiatives.

The Energy Independence Team is being reconstituted and will hold a meeting on October 9. The City wants to continue its leadership in energy efficiency and green initiatives.

Drafting of the Five Year Park Plan, incorporating results of the recent community survey, is being completed and will be discussed at the October Park Board meeting. There will be a public open house to view and comment on the draft Plan this fall. The Park Plan will then be considered by the Plan Commission and ultimately adopted by the Common Council.

The Evansville Police Department is working on final preparations for the onsite WILEAG accreditation assessment that will occur in November. At the successful conclusion of the multi-year effort, Evansville PD will become the smallest department in Wisconsin to receive this hard-earned designation. Accreditation involves utilizing public safety best practices and providing first-rate citizen service.

Our Public Works Department is cleaning up debris from last week's storm. Winterizing of the swimming pool and park bathrooms is underway. Restoration of another section of the Allen Creek walls is occurring. In the next few weeks, the disc golf course will be installed—the baskets have been ordered. Leaf pick-up is just around the corner. The next step in updating the City Hall front lawn will be addition of a building sign. A sign for City Hall is a long-desired enhancement. In a file in my office are sign proposals dating to spring of 2001.

BASE, Building A Safer Evansville, is completing year one of the five-year federal Drug Free America Grant awarded to our community. This grant required a one-to-one match. \$250,000, including \$125,000 in grant funds and \$125,000 in community contributions, much of it in-kind volunteer sweat-equity, was utilized this year to build local capacity through education and training, and to increase community awareness of underage

drinking, drug abuse, and other destructive behaviors. The recent family-friendly Evansville Night Out is an example of BASE at work.

It is Homecoming Week in Evansville. Daily festivities are planned. The store windows downtown are decorated, a tradition of at least a half-century. At Friday's Homecoming Parade, the class floats will be unveiled. The football game against opponent Jefferson begins at 7:00 p.m. on Friday night. I am friends with Mayor Dale Oppermann of Jefferson. As elected officials of WPPI Energy communities, we have interacted at a number of meetings and Jefferson is a fellow Pilot Energy Independent Community. I sent Mayor Dale a message of good luck, but informed him that I bleed blue. Go Blue Devils!

Evansville Announcements

The Creekside Place Health Fair will be held today, September 25, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 102 Maple Street. There will be information about medical care, home safety and efficiency, and community services.

Eager Free Public Library and Creekside Place will host the Book to Movie Club on Thursday, September 26, at 6 p.m. at Creekside Place, 102 Maple Street. "The Hunger Games" is the featured book/movie. There will be discussion following the movie showing.

Saturday, September 28, will be Jam Day at the Evansville Farmers Market. There will be musical jammin' and edible jam products will be sold. A fundraising cookbook sale will also be held. Market hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. adjacent to Creekside Place.

Energy assistance applications will be taken at Creekside Place, 102 Maple Street, on October 17 and November 21 by Energy Services of Rock County. Income guidelines are: \$2,027 per month for a 1-person household; \$2,650 per month for a 2-person household; \$3,274 per month for a 3-person household; and \$3,897 per month for a 4-person household. Please call Energy Services of Rock County at (608) 363-9200 for an appointment time.

AWARE in Evansville is holding its 15th annual diaper drive through October 1. Collected disposable diapers and wipes will be distributed by the Evansville Ecumenical Care Closet. Toddler sized diapers are in high demand. Collection bins are located at the following day care centers: Kids Korner, 264 Lincoln Street; Magic Moments Child Care, 112 West Church Street; Ids & Kids, 40 Old Highway 92; and Wee Ones, 618 Porter Road.

AWARE is also collecting Koats for Kids through October 12. Needed items are winter coats for school-aged children (sizes 5 through 18), boots snow pants, hats, and mittens that are gently-used and in good condition. Items can be dropped off at: BMO Harris Bank, 25 North Madison Street; Faith Community Church, 811 Brown School Plaza;

Care Closet, 206 South Madison Street; Kids Korner, 264 Lincoln Street; Magic Moments Child Care, 112 West Church Street; and Wee Ones, 618 Porter Road.

Evansville Congratulations/Thanks

Evansville congratulates Creekside Place on its recent Travel Green Wisconsin Certification by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. Creekside Place is the first Evansville location to make this environmental commitment to excellence.

Our community thanks Evansville businesses for their outstanding support of student activities throughout the year! Use of storefront windows, hosting the community homecoming tailgate lunch, fundraisers to assist in the rebuilding of our pressbox, supporting Blue Devil Gridiron Club and Booster Club events, sponsoring the City youth baseball program---these are only a few of the ways our local businesses support Evansville sports. We deeply appreciate their commitment to our youth.